

Minister of National Health
and Welfare



Ministre de la Santé nationale
et du Bien-être social

23 X 1991

Mr. Chris Brown
6267 Castille Court
Orleans, Ontario
K1C 1X4

Dear Mr. Brown:

This letter is in response to your telephone conversation with Suzanne Williams of my staff, in which you requested information on what action my Department is currently taking on environmental sensitivities.

The Proceedings of the May 1990 Workshop on Environmental Sensitivities with which you are familiar, have been widely distributed to professional and lay groups interested in this problem. My Department is working on a number of the recommendations in the report. Education of the public and the medical profession is seen as an important requirement. To this end, my officials have drafted an "Issues" article on environmental sensitivities which will inform the public respecting the condition. This will be distributed to the media across the country.

My officials are also in touch with the Canadian Society for Environmental Medicine. They are in the early stages of considering the possibility of organizing a conference for physicians on Environmental & Multiple Chemical Sensitivities in order to raise the awareness of and to update members of the medical profession about this condition.

Since there continues to exist a great deal of controversy about many of the aspects of environmental and chemical sensitivities and a lack of definitive tests, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control has funded a feasibility study and preparation of a protocol for a research study by the Gage Research Institute, Toronto. This protocol, to assess diagnostic criteria for this condition, is currently being reviewed by outside experts with a view to funding a definitive research study.

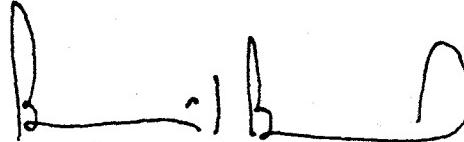
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I understand that you have particular concerns respecting those persons with central nervous system dysfunction as a salient feature of their sensitivities, in terms of considering a sensitivity as a possible cause or precipitating factor of the central nervous system symptoms. With regard to these concerns, the Mental Health Division of my Department has raised the issue of environmental sensitivities with the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and the Federal/Provincial Advisory Committee on Mental Health.

The Canadian Mental Health Association was provided with a package of background material on this subject, for which they were very appreciative. They are empathetic to the concerns you have expressed and foresee workshops or conferences to further discuss this important issue. My officials will also request the Canadian Psychiatric Association to consider and discuss the question, since psychiatric illness and environmental sensitivities are symptom-based and could have similar manifestations. Feedback of the discussions at the Federal/Provincial Committee on Mental Health will be sent to you when the minutes are completed.

I hope that progress will continue to be made, to deal with the concerns of afflicted individuals.

Yours sincerely,



Benoit Bouchard

cc: C. Caccia, M.P.
J. Fulton, M.P.
J. Langan, M.P.
D. MacDonald, M.P.
A. McLaughlin, M.P.